The Old Snugg
Presbyterian Charter
OF
CONSCIENCE:

OR,

A Recital of their

Solemn League and Covenant.

With the Decent Equipage

OF

A *Preface* and a *Postscript.*

1490.d.32

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THE PREFACE.

NEXT to the Misery of *present* Sufferings, nothing can be more Calamitous than the apprehension of *future* Dangers; and these apprehensions of *Futurity* can never be better Vindicated, than when they arise from *past* Experience. This is all that falls within the compass of *Man*, in relation to Futurity, to judge of *hereafter*, by what *has already been*.

From this Capacity of *looking* thus *forwards*, and inferring Things to come, you hear a common Clamour, at this time, among us, of the Danger of *Popery*. These Kingdoms have felt the *Impious Tyranny*, and *Persecuting Cruelty* of that sort of Government: And from what is *past*, no wonder if we look *forwards* with Dread upon such a People in Power.

But, besides these *Inferences*, in regard to *Popery*, I would have us likewise to draw *Consequences* from another Quarter, and to be so just to our *Constitution*, as to look *forwards* into the Dangers of *Presbytery*. These Kingdoms have Groaned under their *Prosperous Usurpation*; our *Church* has been *plunder'd* of its *Revenues*, and *strip'd* of its *Dignities*; the *Crown* of these Kingdoms *trampled* under Foot; and the Blessed Prince that wore it, *Murder'd* by the Hands of these *Enterprizers* at Dominion: They have done all this *heretofore*; therefore what may they not do *hereafter*?

I wou'd not here be thought partial, by carrying your Eyes only to look upon the tendency of *Presbyterian Principles*. The Reason, why I do not likewise shew you the Evil of *Popish Principles*, is, because I never heard any Man of the *Establish'd Church*, either *vindicate* the *Cause* of Popery, *plead* for it, or even extenuate it; no Man ever brought this Charge against a *Churchman*, that he favoured Popery, but either a downright *Dissenter*, or an Abettor of the *Dissention*.

Therefore I leave my view of *Popery*, as of a broken Enemy whilst there are so many good Laws, which are, or ought to be Executed against them, and I shall freely own, that I heartily wish we were as safely provided against the Danger of *Presbytery*, which I am sorry I

can say, has too many Advocates to *plead*, or at least to *Extenuate* the Evil of it, amongst those, who pretend to be Members of a Communion, which suffer'd very heavily under its Influences in *former* Prosperity.

To hear indeed the serious Professions of some few *Presbyterians* amongst *Churchmen*, declaring they wou'd not wish *Presbytery* in Power, that they wou'd rather choose an *Indulgence* under the *Establish'd Church*; to hear all this wou'd dispose a Man to Tenderness and Favour towards them; But I must confess it is seldom you shall be thus Entertain'd, the common and general Sense of the *Dissenters* being express'd in *accusing, calumniating, and foul railing* at that very *Communion*, which gives them *Protection*. This *malicious, invidious Hatred* against the Church is indeed more agreeable to, and more of a piece with their old Practices, than the *Meekness* of those few *Ignorants* among them, who speak their Satisfaction under an *Indulgence*.

This *Holy Temper* of theirs, you shall see drawn out in their *Covenant, that Charter of their Consciences*, of perpetual Obligation. It runs in this Form.

* *A Solemn League and Covenant for Reformation, and Deference of Religion, the Honour and Happiness of the King, and the Peace and Safety of the three Kingdoms of* England, Scotland, *and* Ireland.

WE Noblemen, Barons, Knights, Gentlemen, Citizens, Burgesses, Ministers of the Gospel, and Commons of all sorts in the Kingdoms of Scotland, England *and* Ireland, *by the Providence of GOD living under one King, and being of one reformed Religion, having before our Eyes the glory of GOD, and the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Honour and Happiness of the King's Majesty and his Posterity, and the true publick Liberty, Safety, and Peace of the Kingdoms, wherein every ones private Condition is included; and calling to mind the treacherous and bloody Plots, Conspiracies, Attempts, and Practices of the Enemies of GOD, against the true Religion, and Professours thereof in all places, especially in these three Kingdoms ever since the Reformation of Religion, and how much their Rage, Power, and Presumption, are of late, and at this time encreased and exercised; whereof the deplorable Estate of the Church and Kingdom of* Ireland, *the distressed Estate of the Church and Kingdom of* England, *and the dangerous Estate of the Church and Kingdom of* Scotland, *are present and publick Testimonies: We have now at last (after other means of Supplication, Remonstrance, Protestations and Sufferings) for the Preservation of our selves, and our Religion, from utter Ruin and Destruction, according to the commendable Practise of these Kingdoms in former times, and the Example of GOD's People in other Nations, after mature Deliberation, resolved and determined to enter into a mutual and solemn League and Covenant: Wherein we all subscribe, and each one of us for himself, with our hands lifted up to the most high GOD, do Swear:*

* *It was taken by the Lords, Commons and Assembly of Divines,* Sept. 25. 1643.

1. That

1. THAT we shall sincerely, really and constantly through the Grace of GOD, endeavour in our several places and callings, the Preservation of the Reformed Religion in the Church of *Scotland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, against our common Enemies: The Reformation of Religion in the Kingdoms of *England*, and *Ireland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, according to the Word of GOD, and the Example of the best Reformed Churches: And shall endeavour to bring the Churches of GOD in the three Kingdoms to the neareſt Conjunction and Uniformity in Religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church-Government, Directory for Worship and Catechising; That we and our Posterity after us, may as Brethren, live in Faith and Love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.

2. That we shall in like manner, without respect of Persons, endeavour the Extirpation of Popery, Prelacy (that is) Church-Government by Arch-Bishops, Bishops, their Chancellours and Commissaries, Deans, Deans and Chapters, Arch-deacons, and all other Ecclesiastical Officers pending on that Hierarchical Superstition, Heresie, Schism, Profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness; least we partake in other Mens Sins, and thereby be in danger to receive of their Plagues; and that the Lord may be one, and his Name one in the three Kingdoms.

3. We shall with the same Sincerity, Reallity and Constancy, in our several Vocations, endeavour with our Estates and Lives, mutually to preserve the Rights and Privileges of the Parliaments, and the Liberties of the Kingdoms; and to preserve and defend the King's Majesty's Person and Authority, in the Preservation and Defence of the true Religion and Liberties of the Kingdoms; that the World may bear witness with our Consciences of our Loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his Majesty's just Power and Greatness.

4. We shall also with all Faithfulness endeavour the Discovery of all such as have been, or shall be Incendiaries, Malignants, or evil Instruments, by hindering the Reformation of Religion, dividing the King from his People, or one of the Kingdoms from another, or making any Faction or Parties amongst the People, contrary to this League and Covenant, That they may be brought to publick Tryal, and receive condign Punishment, as the degree of their Offences shall require or deserve, or the supream Judicatories of both Kingdoms respectively, or others having Power from them for that Effect, shall judge convenient.

5. And whereas the happiness of a blessed Peace between these Kingdoms denyed in former times to our Progenitors, is by the good Providence of GOD, granted unto us, and hath been lately included, and settled by both Parliaments, we shall each one of us, according to our Place and Interest, endeavour that they may remain conjoined in a firm

firm Peace and Union to all Posterity, and that Justice may be done upon the wilful Opposers thereof, in manner expressed in the precedent Article.

6. We shall also according to our Places and Callings, in this common Cause of Religion, Liberty, and Peace of the Kingdoms, assist and defend all those that enter into this League and Covenant, in the maintaining and pursuing thereof; and shall not suffer our selves directly or indirectly, by whatsoever Combination, Perswasion or Terrour, to be divided and withdrawn from this blessed Union and Conjunction, whether to make Defection to the contrary part, or to give our selves to a detestable Indifferency, or Neutrality in this Cause, which so much concerneth the Glory of GOD, the Good of the Kingdoms, and Honour of the King; but shall all the days of our Lives zealously and constantly continue therein, against all Opposition, and promote the same according to our Power, against all Lets and Impediments whatsoever; and what we are not able our selves to suppress or overcome, we shall reveal and make known, that it may be timely prevented or removed: All which we shall do as in the sight of God.

And, because these Kingdoms are guilty of many Sins, and Provocations against GOD, and his Son Jesus Christ, as is too manifest by our present Distresses and Dangers, the Fruits thereof, we profess and declare before GOD and the World, our unfeigned Desire to be humbled for our own Sins, and for the Sins of these Kingdoms, especially that we have not, as we ought, valued the inestimable Benefits of the Gospel, that we have not laboured for the Purity and Power thereof, and that we have not endeavoured to receive Christ in our Hearts, nor to walk worthy of him in our Lives, which are the Causes of other Sins and Transgressions, so much abounding amongst us, and our true and unfeigned Purpose, Desire and Endeavour for our selves, and all others under our Power and Charge, both in publick and in private, in all Duties we owe to GOD and Man, to amend our lives, and each one to go before another in the Example of a real Reformation; that the Lord may turn away his Wrath and heavy Indignation, and establish these Churches and Kingdoms in Truth and Peace. And this Covenant we make in the presence of Almighty GOD, the Searcher of all Hearts, with a true Intention to perform the same, as we shall answer at that great Day when the Secrets of all Hearts shall be discloſed; Most humbly beseeching the Lord to strengthen us by his holy Spirit for this End, and to bless our Desires and Proceedings, with such Success, as may be Deliverance and Safety to his People, and Encouragement to other Christian Churches groaning under, or in Danger of the Yoke of Antichristian Tyranny, to join in the same, or like Association and Covenant, to the Glory of GOD, the Enlargement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the Peace and Tranquility of Christian Kingdoms and Common-wealths.

POSTSCRIPT.

AFter reading over this *Solemn, Sanctimonious Covenant*, how ſtrangely I find my ſelf indiſpos'd for *Sincerity*, whatever I chooſe to profeſs to my *Prince?* Sincerity! abandon'd Virtue! There are no Projects to be carry'd on by *Sincerity*; A Man had as good renounce the World, as be *Sincere* in it. Prithee, my Friend, read this *proſperous Covenant* over again, obſerve the Title of it, *for the Honour and Happineſs of the King, and the Peace, and Safety of his Kingdoms*; in the Preface of it, They declare very religiouſly, *they live under one King*, and they have the *Glory of God before their Eyes*, that very Inſtant. In the Body of the Covenant, theſe good Subjects profeſs, they will *preſerve and defend his Majeſty*, that *they had no Intention to diminiſh his Majeſty's juſt Power and Greatneſs*, and *that* they will *with all Faithfulneſs endeavour a Diſcovery of thoſe Malignants who wou'd divide the King from his People.*

Now, wou'd not one take theſe to be a *Loyal* Set of *Dutiful* Subjects, what cou'd *Duty* direct them to ſay more? And yet oh Fallacy of Profeſſion! Theſe very Men had then been for ſome time influencing, and conducting an inteſtine War againſt *this, their King*; and after they had ſucceſsfully manag'd the Diſtractions of theſe Kingdoms for about 5 Years after this *Covenant, Theſe Preſervers of his Majeſty, theſe faithful Enquirers after thoſe Malignants who wou'd divide the King from his People*, with their own Hands cut off this King's Head, and ſo had the *Dividing* of him, in their own way, from his People. So much for *Preſbyterian Sincerity* to their Prince.

They are indeed a little more *open* in their Declarations againſt the *Church*, and every honeſt Man will value them for *this Frankneſs*. It is bravely ſaid of them here in this *League, that without reſpect of Perſons they will endeavour the Extirpation of Popery, Prelacy*, &c. [And that you may not miſtake what they mean by *Prelacy*, it is fairly here explain'd] that is, *Church-Government* by *Arch-Biſhops, Biſhops*, &c. and to give us all warning what ſort of *Endeavour* they will uſe, it is no leſs than this in the 6th Article, *Not to ſuffer themſelves directly, or indirectly, by whatſoever Combination, Perſwaſion or Terror, to be divided and drawn from this bleſſed Union, and Conjunction, whether to make a Defection to the contrary part, or to give themſelves to a deteſtable Indifferency and Neutrality, in this Cauſe, which ſo much concerns the Glory of GOD.* Here the *Party* draw themſelves out in Battle Array, and with their Lives and Fortunes ſtand againſt *Church-Government*; they do not take the Field againſt our *Ceremonies*, but againſt the very *Being* of our *Church*, and there is not one Word of *Moderation*, even amidſt all the *Cant* of this *League and Covenant*. When they name *Indifferency*, look back to the Paſſage I juſt quoted, it is call'd *deteſtable*. *Indifferency* is a *Vertue* in other People, and a *Vice* in themſelves; by which means they perſecute upon Principle, whenever they have Power, and they plead upon *Courteſie* to be ſpar'd when they have not.

Let

2 Let any Man fairly, and equally compare the *Profeſſions* in this *Solemn League*, with the *Practiſes* in the Behaviour of the *Preſbyterians*, and he muſt come to this Judgment, That whatever *Enmity* they declare the *Church*, they are *ſteddy* to purſue it; and whatever *Duty* they declare to the *Crown*, they are *inconſtant* to it, and hereby their *Practiſes* conform to one another, tho' their *Profeſſions* do not; for it is inconſiſtent to declare for the *Crown*, and againſt the *Church*, as they do; but it is conſiſtent enough to *act* againſt *Both*.

What is it, I wonder now, that any *Church-man* can find in ſuch a *Character* as this, to diſpoſe him to take it under *Patronage*; this *Character* is a true one, or elſe Hiſtory is falſe, and our Memories fail us; the *Preſbyterians* themſelves will not deny the Authentickneſs of the *Covenant*, they wou'd as ſoon deny their Creed. You will find this *Charter* bound up along with their *Catechiſms* and *Confeſſion of Faith*; and I take this Method of diſperſing it into the Hands of Church-men, that as no Friend to our *Conſtitution* does either patronize, or countenance the Principles of *Popery*, ſo no Man muſt pretend to be a Friend to our Conſtitution, who either vindicates or encourages the Principles of *Preſbytery*. He who has ſo little Senſe of Religion as to chooſe *one Side*, or *the Other*, rather than loſe his Fortune, wou'd chooſe *either Side*, I am afraid, rather than part with the Pledge he is ſo fond of; for my part, I ſhall never think it a ſign of a Church-man's having Religion to waver in it to *any ſide*.

I have always found my ſelf inclin'd to make Allowances for the Church-men of 41, tho' they ruin'd *Themſelves*, their *Religion* and *Country*, by their too eaſy Credulity to the *Artificial Clamours* of the *Preſbyterians* of that time; the Church-men then knew nothing of Perſecution in any other Hands but the *Papiſts*, and it is natural to dread a known *Deſtroyer*, and to fence even againſt imaginary Fears. But the dear bought Experience *of thoſe Times* informs us, of the Violence, and Havock of other Hands beſides the *Papiſts*; and I cannot ſo well find room for Allowances for our Credulity *now*, if we ſhou'd be carry'd into the ſame Ruin by the Old Impoſture.

FINIS.

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